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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 06 HARARE 000946

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SUBJECT: MUGABE AND ZANU-PF MAINTAIN POWER

Classified By: Ambassador Charles A. Ray for reason 1.4 (d).

SUMMARY

¶1. (C) President Robert Mugabe, in advance of the ZANU-PF Congress set to begin on December 8, has consolidated his position within ZANU-PF and will continue to rule with the support of the military leadership. The Congress will likely confirm decisions already made by the party. ZANU-PF in turn is focused on maintaining power. While it will undoubtedly make concessions in the ongoing South African-directed SADC mediation on the Global Political Agreement (GPA), unless SADC and MDC-T factions are able to address the current paradigm of a ZANU-PF-military alliance, fundamental reform will not be achieved. MDC-T recognizes that continued presence of securocrats within the military, police, and intelligence structures is the primary impediment to change, but is unable to engage them. Further, MDC-T lacks strategic vision and is focused more on elections, which it feels it can win because of the popularity of Tsvangirai and the MDC party, than on achieving real reform. It now appears that elections will take place in 2012 or 2013. The results will probably depend on whether institutions develop to check ZANU-PF intimidation and violence and to permit a relatively fair election, or whether ZANU-PF will be able to use the same tactics as in June 2008 to gain victory. END SUMMARY.

Mugabe and the Zezuru Factor

¶2. (SBU) The Shona, concentrated in Mashonaland, constitute about 80 percent of the Zimbabwean population and the Ndebele, centered in Matabeleland, 17 percent. Within the Shona, the three main subgroups are the Zezuru, the Karanga, and the Manyika. Mugabe is a Zezuru, and since independence in 1980 the Zezuru have been the dominant ethnic group in Zimbabwe. With the signing of the Unity Accord in 1987, Mugabe, who had been prime minister, became president, and two vice presidents were selected: Joshua Nkomo, an Ndebele, and Simon Muzenda, a Karanga. Under the Accord, there was an understanding that one vice president would be Ndebele. Nkomo died in 1999 and was replaced by Joseph Msika, also an

Ndebele. Muzenda died in 2003. In what became known as the Tscholotsho incident, Emmerson Mnangagwa, a Karanga, attempted to succeed Muzenda. Msika was elderly and Mnangagwa and his backers, including Jonathan Moyo, schemed that Mnangagwa, after becoming vice president, would become first vice president after Msika's death and would be first in line to succeed Mugabe. Mugabe instead selected Joice Mujuru, a Zezuru.

13. (SBU) The support of a majority of Zimbabwe's 10 provinces is required for election to ZANU-PF positions. With the death of Msika earlier this year, and in anticipation of the Congress, Mnangagwa formulate a slate for the presidium, ZANU-PF's highest organ: Mugabe, First Secretary (National President), Oppah Muchinguri, and John Nkomo (now ZANU-PF Chair), Second Secretaries (National Vice Presidents), and Kembo Mohadi (now co-Minister of Home Affairs) as ZANU-PF Chair. Nkomo, an Ndebele, and Mohadi, a QAffairs) as ZANU-PF Chair. Nkomo, an Ndebele, and Mohadi, a Venda allied with the Ndebele, would satisfy the ethnic proportion required by the Unity Accord. Mnangagwa's goal was to displace Mujuru. The nominations of Nkomo and Mohadi from Matabeleland in Mnangagwa's plan would secure the support of three provinces: Matabeleland North, Matabeleland South, and Bulawayo; Muchinguri, a Manyika, would get the support of Manicaland; and Mnangagwa would bring along the Karanga-dominated provinces of Midlands and Masvingo. Mnangagwa's plan did not play out. Didymus Mutasa, a Manyika from Manicaland, put himself forward for ZANU-PF Chair with the support of Manicaland and Mashonaland Central and Muchinguri lost Manicaland support. Mujuru ultimately emerged with the support of at least nine provinces. Mohadi

HARARE 00000946 002 OF 006

failed to develop support, and Simon Kaya Moyo, currently Ambassador to South Africa, won the support of a sufficient number of provinces as party Chair. Moyo and his backers argued that under the Unity Accord, the position of party chair, as with one vice president position, should be filled by an Ndebele.

14. (C) The ZANU-PF Politburo met on December 7 in advance of the Congress. With the support of Mugabe, Mutasa argued that the Unity Accord did not apply to the position of national chair. Mugabe backed Mutasa, a longtime colleague, and the Mujuru faction supported Moyo. The Mujurus prevailed and the Politburo endorsed Mugabe, Joice Mujuru, John Nkomo, and Moyo.

15. (SBU) The ZANU-PF Congress will rubber stamp the above decisions made by the provinces and the Politburo, and the ZANU-PF presidium will consist of Zezurus Mugabe and Joice Mujuru and Ndebeles Nkomo and Moyo. Ndebele officials have little backing within their constituencies -- they come from Matabeleland where ZANU-PF is generally reviled because of the Gukurahundi massacres of the 1980s -- and Nkomo and Moyo can be counted on to do Mugabe's bidding. In addition to Mugabe and Mujuru, almost all of the top ZANU-PF party positions are held by Zezuru. Almost all the top securocrats are Zezuru: Chief of Defense Forces Constantine Chiwenga, Air Force Commander Perrance Shiri, CIO Director Happyton Bonyongwe, Commissioner of Police Augustine Chihuri, and Prison Services Commissioner Paradzai Zimondi. The Zezurus are now in undisputed control of ZANU-PF -- Mnangagwa and the Karangas have been badly beaten -- but the fight between Mugabe and the Mujurus over Mutasa has demonstrated Mugabe does not have total control.

ZANU-PF Succession

16. (C) Conventional analysis posits that there are two principal factions within ZANU-PF, Mujuru and Mnangagwa, and that the dominant faction is likely to provide the successor to Mugabe. Over the years, as Mugabe has manipulated party

politics, the fortunes of one have risen with the decline of the other. For now, the Mujuru faction is in the ascendancy.

But it appears unlikely that either Mujuru or Mnangagwa will eventually become president. ZANU-PF, according to most analysts, is not ready to accept a woman as president. And Mugabe has made clear by his actions that his successor will be a Zezuru.

¶17. (C) Mugabe in 2006 promised he would step down as president in 2008. He now appears determined to die in office and it is unlikely that at the Congress he will provide any clues to succession. Determining a successor to Mugabe is therefore speculative. Two possible candidates are Chiwenga and Sydney Sekeramayi. The military plays an important role in Zimbabwean politics and it would be logical that Chiwenga help perpetuate this role, albeit in a civilian capacity, by succeeding Mugabe. A major handicap would be his legacy of violence. Sekeramayi has a close relationship to the military; he was Minister of Defense for a number of years and is now Minister of State for National Security in Qyears and is now Minister of State for National Security in the President's office. He is also close to General Solomon Mujuru, the power behind the Mujuru faction.

Maintaining Power

¶18. (C) Despite the GPA, which provides for a National Security Council (NSC) to oversee military and security matters, the Joint Operations Command (JOC) continues to meet and support Mugabe; the NSC has met only once. (NOTE: The JOC consists of the service chiefs, Mnangagwa as Minister of Defense, and reportedly Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe Governor Gideon Gono. A legacy of the Rhodesian government, it is

HARARE 00000946 003 OF 006

responsible for security and recently has played a policy role. In 2008 it coordinated election violence and intimidation. END NOTE.) ZANU-PF has maintained its structures throughout Zimbabwe and we continue to receive reports of intimidation and occasional violence, particularly in Mashonaland. There are reportedly about 20,000 youths on the civil service rolls who are performing no jobs; their activities are coordinated by ZANU-PF officials and national and local military officials. Additionally, there are thousands of youths in resettled areas. Without jobs and educational opportunity, they are subject to manipulation by ZANU-PF.

¶19. (C) ZANU-PF is old and there are significant fissures, as evidenced by the ongoing struggle between Mujuru and Mnangagwa. It appears to be in a slow, irreversible decline. With no ideas and no program, other than to proclaim its liberation credentials as the anti-MDC, it is increasingly unpopular. But in the face of the challenge by MDC, and perceived efforts at regime change by the West, we can expect that for the time being it will unite behind Mugabe to maintain power. Mugabe is the glue that holds the party together. The death knell of the party may await his death and/or that of the other dinosaurs at the helm.

¶10. (C) ZANU-PF has been weakened by dollarization and the sidelining of Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe Governor Gideon Gono's printing press. In the past, for example, in financing Congresses or Conferences, the party would determine the cost and Gono would print the money. A ZANU-PF member in charge of raising money for the Congress told us that the party's goal was to raise US\$3 million to support the attendance of 10,000 people. In the run-up to the Congress, the party had raised about US\$900,000, much of it from ZANU-PF allies such as Billy Rautenbach, John Bredenkamp, and Nicholas Van Hoogstraten. Provincial party branches were contributing little and the party was considering scaling back the number of attendees.

¶11. (C) To finance itself and party insiders, ZANU-PF has been looking for new revenue streams. The Marange diamond fields appear to have the most potential. The Mining Development Corporation of Zimbabwe has entered into deals with companies to exploit Marange, but it appears a cabal of Gono and military officials is siphoning off substantial profits. The press continues to carry occasional reports of Chinese investment, but this appears to be wishful thinking. An adequate source of revenue is critical for ZANU-PF to perpetuate itself by keeping insiders happy, financing its repressive machinery, and financing its electoral machinery. The party's concern about finances has probably caused Mugabe and Gono to talk about bringing back the Zimbabwe dollar. (NOTE: Biti has been adamant that he will not allow the Zimbabwe dollar to return; nevertheless, rumors persist -- to the detriment of investment. END NOTE.)

The Future of the Military

¶12. (C) The military leadership is the fundamental impediment to meaningful political reform. Leaders impeded to meaningful political reform. Leaders understand that political change would likely result in loss of their positions. In March 2008, Mugabe was reportedly ready to retire after a humiliating loss. Chiwenga and others, concerned for their own hides, convinced him to fight on; and then orchestrated the reign of violence that resulted in Mugabe's "reelection" in June. Similarly, they oppose full compliance with the GPA, since that could lead to fair elections and the concomitant defeat of ZANU-PF. Their obvious concern is that, stripped of the protection of ZANU-PF, they would be subject to prosecution for a variety of offenses ranging from crimes against humanity, to human rights violations, to common crimes.

¶13. (C) Prime Minister and MDC-T leader Morgan Tsvangirai

HARARE 00000946 004 OF 006

realizes the importance of the military problem. He and others in his party have discussed the possibility of a buy-out and amnesty. (NOTE: While there are those who believe the benefits of removing the military from service would be worth almost any cost, including immunity, many Zimbabweans who remember well Gukurahundi and other atrocities would certainly oppose any deal. END NOTE.) Chiwenga and others consider themselves liberation heroes, and look down upon Tsvangirai for not having participated in the struggle. MDC-T does not have a representative and interlocutor that can talk to Chiwenga and his military colleagues about making the NSC a functioning body and about such issues as amnesty.

¶14. (C) For now, top military leaders, particularly Chiwenga, exist in a symbiotic relationship with Mugabe. They need him in order to maintain their positions and have the protection of the party. He needs them in order to intimidate and threaten would-be challengers, and to perpetuate the climate of fear which has enabled him to rule seemingly in perpetuity. The military and party may gradually meld together. There are rumors that Chiwenga is interested in becoming ZANU-PF Commissar in Charge of Elections, as a prelude to becoming president. 20 generals and colonels are in a three-year program at the University of Zimbabwe to obtain a B.A. in international relations, and 12 generals, including Chiwenga, are in a one-year international relations masters program.

¶15. (C) The military has a tradition of internal discipline and adherence to the hierarchy. But below top military leadership, the military reflects the ethnic divisions and rivalries that exist in ZANU-PF. For example, there is resentment on the part of higher-level Karanga officers that their advancement has been stymied by the Zezuru top echelon. Younger officers without liberation credentials, regardless

of their ethnicity, are likewise held back by a promotion ceiling, imposed by ageing veterans of the independence struggle who do not trust the younger generation and have no plans for the future. There are recurring reports of dissatisfaction over pay and conditions; and desertions are reportedly on the rise. So far, however, military leadership has kept the lid on, and there is no expectation the military will soon fracture.

The SADC Mediation

¶16. (SBU) Zuma's new mediation team of Mac Maharaj, Charles Nqakula, and Lindiwe Zulu visited Harare last week and met with the GPA principals (Mugabe, Tsvangirai, and Arthur Mutambara) and with the negotiators of the three parties. The South Africans reportedly listened, but did not resolve the outstanding issues. They returned to Harare this week and will report to South African President Zuma on progress. He in turn will report to President Guebuza of Mozambique who heads the SADC Troika. SADC and the parties have obviously missed the goal set at the Troika Summit in Maputo on November 5 of resolving issues within 30 days. With the ZANU-PF Congress taking place this week, Mugabe and QZANU-PF Congress taking place this week, Mugabe and Tsvangirai traveling to Copenhagen next week for the United Nations Climate Change Conference, and the Festive Season, it is likely negotiations will go into next year.

¶17. (SBU) The main issues for the MDC continue to be the appointment of MDC governors, the replacement of Gono and Attorney General Johannes Tomana, and the swearing-in of Roy Bennett as Deputy Minister of Agriculture. (NOTE: Bennett's treason trial will resume in January. END NOTE.) ZANU-PF has put forth the issues of sanctions and pirate radio stations (stations such as SW Radio and Studio 7 which broadcast from outside of Zimbabwe). A host of other GPA issues have apparently been raised, and we anticipate the South Africans will try to focus on core disputes.

HARARE 00000946 005 OF 006

¶18. (C) There is a sense in Harare that Zuma and his team bring more intensity and resolve to the SADC mediation than did the former facilitator, Thabo Mbeki. We expect that Mugabe will make some concessions, perhaps in exchange for an agreement by Tsvangirai that he will ask the West to review and/or lift some sanction, e.g. on parastatals and banks. The commissions -- Media Commission (which would license newspapers), Electoral Commission, Human Rights Commission, and Anti-Corruption Commission -- may be established. Mugabe may agree to appoint MDC provincial governors. But even with some ZANU-PF concessions on GPA issues, Mugabe and the military will continue to hold the balance of power. The Zimbabwean question is not political, but political/military, and unless the MDC and SADC focus on ZANU-PF and the military, the fundamental paradigm of power will not change.

MDC Focused on Elections

¶19. (C) MDC-T and Tsvangirai enjoy immensely greater popularity than Mugabe and ZANU-PF. Zimbabweans give Tsvangirai credit for peace and stability -- especially compared to last year -- that the country enjoys, as well as improvement in the economic situation. Tsvangirai and the MDC are confident they would win a relatively fair election -- and getting to an election is the focus of their efforts. They are willing to tolerate the bumps in the road -- intimidation, violence (at a much lower level than a year ago), and selective prosecutions. In their view, this is all part of the process of reaching elections.

¶20. (C) But, apart from elections, MDC-T seems to lack a

strategic vision. It is not focused on building institutions and forming alliances that would help ensure victory in an election. Civil society complains that MDC-T has not reached out to it. Zuma and SADC were reportedly upset that they learned about MDC-T's temporary "disengagement" from the transitional government from the newspapers and not from Tsvangirai.

¶21. (C) Part of MDC-T's problem is that much of the party leadership is in government. Tendai Biti, for example, is the party's Secretary General and should be responsible for coordinating strategy. But he is preoccupied by his job as Minister of Finance and the party's Secretariat is weak. Relatedly, the Office of the Prime Minister lacks a strong Chief of Staff, and there is a lack of coordination among ministries. While in this divided government, it is not surprising that Tsvangirai, as Prime Minister, does not have control over ZANU-PF-led ministries, there is nevertheless a marked absence of coordination between MDC-led ministries.

The End Game

¶22. (C) The GPA contemplated an 18-month process for the drafting of a new constitution, followed by a referendum, and then elections. More and more, the parties are talking about an elongated transitional period which could result in elections in 2013 as required by the current constitution. ZANU-PF knows it would lose an early election unless it resorted to violence; it wants to try to heal internal divisions and rebuild. MDC-T is becoming comfortable in government. Its parliamentarians are enjoying the perquisites of office and don't want to contest elections sooner than necessary. MDC-T supporters have fresh memories of the 2008 election-related violence and are enjoying relative peace and stability, as well as improved economic conditions. They also do not desire early elections. Finally, MDC-M office holders know that they will probably be defeated in elections. In particular, ministers such as Arthur Mutambara, Welshman Ncube, and Priscilla Misihairabwi-Mashonga would lose their government positions.

HARARE 00000946 006 OF 006

¶23. (C) Genuine political reform is unlikely until reformers decisively win an election. MDC-T is correct that it would win a fair election. But ZANU-PF is intent on holding on to power, and many believe the party would resort to the violence of 2008 to avoid losing. The critical issue in the months and years ahead is whether MDC-T, MDC-M, and civil society can build electoral institutions, and whether ZANU-PF and the military can be controlled, so that fair elections can take place.

RAY